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# EULOGY,

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AUGUST 19, 1819;

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ON THE CHARACTER OF THEIR LATE FRIEND AND BROTHER,

THOMAS SMITH WEBB, ESQ.

BY PAUL DEAN.

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# EULOGY.

IN this assemblage of Brothers, one is wanting—in this extensive association of the lovers of sacred harmony, one voice is forever silent, which has so often sweetly mingled in the hymn, and swelled the anthem of praise to the Majesty of Heaven; to whom we now devoutly and feelingly offer our plaint, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from us, and our acquaintance into darkness." How powerfully does this call to our awakened recollection the hours of social pleasure and delights of friendship, which have fled on the wings of time, to return no more. How solemnly does it remind us, that we too, must soon quit these pleasant circles of friendship and harmony, for the darkness and silence of the tomb! and O, my God, how poignant is the grief, excited by these reflections! But we are not assembled to indulge in the reveries of our sorrow; but to improve this afflictive dispensation of divine Providence, by evincing our high and un-

feigned respect for the virtues and services of our departed Brother.

The subject of this address, is not one that has waded to honour through fields of blood and carnage ; nor one, rendered illustrious by swaying the sceptre of royalty ; but it is one, whose private and social virtues rendered him at once the ornament and delight of every circle, of private and social life ; and whose public worth, and urbanity of manners, draw after him the respect and affection of every acquaintance. Such indeed was our late worthy companion and associate, THOMAS SMITH WEBB, Esq. whose character and services I shall attempt to place before you, not indeed as those of a perfect man, much less as those of a God in human form, (which is too often the case in rhapsodic eulogies,) but I will endeavour to exhibit them in an artless dress, as those of a worthy and good man, whom we all loved with the ardour af pure attachment, and whose death we now deeply deplore.

I represent to your imagination no kingdom clad in the specious drapery of death, for a departed sovreign ; no nation bathed in tears, for the loss of its chieftain ; but I show you here a circle of relatives of the dearest names,* a Fraternity to whom he was united by the closest ties, and an extensive acquaintance, who all know his merits, and truly respect his memory ; to them, I trust, the following short, but faithful account of him, will not be an unacceptable offering.

He was the son of the late Mr. SAMUEL WEBB, born in Boston October the 30th, 1771, and named

* Mrs. WEBB and children, the sisters, and other relations of the deceased, were present on this occasion.

Thomas Smith, for an uncle of his mother's, who was the first settled minister of Falmouth (now Portland, Maine.) As soon as his years would permit, he shared the advantages of the public and Latin schools, and by his rapid improvement, contributed to their well deserved and high reputation; after which, he became a proficient in the French language. Endowed by the bountiful Creator, with a mind above the common rank, the sweetness of his disposition, and the amiableness of his manners, while they procured for him the esteem of his instructors, and young associates, rivited also the parental affections, and strengthened the hope, that he would one day become both an ornament and a blessing to society.

To him application and study were but pleasures, and the early buddings of his genius were soon discovered in the poetry of his youthful pen, and rewarded by the smile of approbation, which they excited. As an occupation congenial to his natural taste for mental improvement, he at a suitable age served an apprenticeship at the printing business in this town. Being thus qualified, he leaves the delights of home, to try his fortune on the stage of active life, and goes from his native town to Keene, in New-Hampshire, with a view to establish himself in business. But partial success there, and more flattering prospects at Albany in the state of New-York, induced his removal to that place in 1792. In the course of the following year he established a paper-staining manufactory, and prospered there during seven years.

Formed by the kind hand of nature for society, with a heart overflowing with generous affections, and a soul touched with the nicest sensibility, he aspired

to that high zested and pure felicity, which heaven in mercy, hath restrained to the domestic association of kindred minds, where reigns triumphant mutual virtue, mutual confidence and mutual love; and in the autumn of 1797, he united in matrimonial bands with the amiable Miss MARTHA HOPKINS, of his native Boston. Now he commences the husband—now the father—in which characters he has done much honour to himself, and conferred much happiness on the friend of his bosom, and the children of his affection. The fruits of this marriage were long protracted joys, and five lovely children lent. To his cup of joys, heaven adds the cup of mingled bitterness and affliction, three of those children are no more; and in 1807, death summoned the fair companion of his bosom to the world of spirits. With a heart wrung with grief, and a soul bleeding with anguish, he repairs to the benign religion of heaven, and reclining his wearied head upon the bosom of the christian hope, there he sings in plaintive notes upon his harp, "divine hope thou art the lamp of life," the only lamp that burns unextinguished in this land of darkness. But grief and affliction unable to overcome, only chastened and refined the sad afflictions of his manly heart, and in 1808, he renewed the marriage vows with the worthy sister* of his departed wife; whom alas, he hath left to feel the widowed grief, that none but heaven can relieve.

Since we left him at Albany, we have seen him pass with his family, to Providence, R. I. and after several prosperous years, return to his native town, in

* By this woman he had four children, two of whom have since deceased, so that of nine children, but four now survive.

1813; and more recently, we have beheld him contemplating, and preparing to spend the evening of his days in the Western Country; and it was but as yesterday, he took his leave of us for his seat there.

One only and promising son, now at Brown University, in Providence, R. I. remains to heir his Father's virtues, and bear up his name. Solicitous for his future welfare, we devoutly commend him to the care and blessing of that great and good Being, who holds in his hand the destinies of the world. As a man of business and a merchant, Mr. Webb exercised that mature judgment, and that unwearied persevereance, which generally ensured him success, though he had enough of misfortune, to chasten his prosperity, and shew him superior to the shafts of adversity. We believe he has contributed much to regulate and strengthen the cotton manufactoring interest in Rhode-Island, and in this vicinity; and he always sustained the character of undoubted integrity.

In the capacity of citizen, he was unimpeachable, in that of a soldier, he exhibited a pattern of discipline, and had the patriotism to defend his country, and protect her laws. In the militia, the strongest bulwark of free governments, he was honoured at Providence, with a Colonel's command, which he also honoured by an able and faithful discharge of its duties; and was unanimously chosen Brigadier General, of which honour he declined the acceptance. Possessed of a soul disposed to general philanthropy, and desiring to widen the sphere of his usefulness, by granting as far as possible, relief to distressed humanity, where ever dispersed, he sought an early acquaintance with the benevolent principles of Free Masonry; which he hath

since studied scientifically, with a zeal becoming their high character, and given us a lucid and practical commentary on them, in the conduct of his life. He was initiated into the mysteries of the lower degrees in Keene, N. H. and a short time after received the honours of the higher at Philadelphia.

His first masonic labours were directed to the establishment and instruction of a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, and also, an Encampment of Knights Templars, in the city of Albany,* by which he did the fraternity in that place an important and lasting service. His ever active and penetrating mind soon discovered the necessity that something should be done for the better government and the greater harmony and prosperity of the Chapters. For this great object he projected the scheme of a General Grand Royal Arch Chapter; and in 1798 procured a meeting of Delegates, from most of the Chapters in the United States, at the city of Hartford in Connecticut. When and where, after much deliberation, that most excellent Institution was formed; its excellent constitution adopted; and he was honoured with one of its principal offices.

After his removal to Providence, the Fraternity soon dicovered his zeal and intelligence in masonry and called him to the responsible station, of Grand Master of the state. Here too, we behold him distinguished as High Priest of the Chapter, honoured as Grand Commander of the Encampment, and filling with dignity the chair of Solomon, as Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the Northern States: And at a meet-

* Here also he was chosen, and served as Master of Temple Lodge.

ing of the General Grand Chapter of the United States, holden at the city of New-York, he was unanimously elected to the first office in that elevated assembly of the heads of the Masonic family, and at the same time, called to the chair of the General Grand Encampment of the United States ; but more solicitous for the honour and prosperity of Masonry, than for personal promotion, he modestly declined their acceptance in favor of the Hon. De Witt Clinton, who now fills them both with pre-eminent talents, and accepted for himself, the gift of the second offices in those august bodies.

For these high and numerous distinctions, he was worthy and well qualified, by his extensive and accurate knowledge of the ancient and modern history of the Fraternity, and also by his perfect acquaintance with the principles, obligations and maxims of Free Masonry. He was apt to teach, both by precept and example ; and formed to rule in the midst of his Brethren. He wore his honours with a dignified modesty, and happily blended authority with mildness. He ruled but to instruct, improve, and benefit those whom he honoured and loved. Wherever he came, he imparted light, and life, and spirit, as well as "wisdom, strength and beauty," to our assemblies.

But we are happy to say that his usefulness hath extended far beyond his personal labours. Thousands who never witnessed those, have been benefitted by them, in the explanations and illustrations, contained in his Masonic Monitor, which has passed through several editions, and been received by the Lodges of our country, as a "Manual of Morality" and Masonry ; and is, and I trust will long continue to be, of invaluable use to them. It acquaints those who are not masons

with the nature, design, and moral principles of the institution ; and thus removes many unfounded prejudices. It imparts ample and correct information to masons, and thus we hope will be a mean of producing, and forever preserving, an entire uniformity in all our Lodges ; an event, much to be desired for the satisfaction of good Masons, and the honour and prosperity of the Fraternity.

For much of our present harmony and information, as well as elevation of rank, which we now hold as an order of men ; for many of the charities, we have been enabled to diffuse, the consolations we have mingled in the cup of affliction, and the relief, which has been extended to fellow humanity in distress. For all this, we are happy to acknowledge, we are much indebted to the labours, examples and writings, of Brother Webb, whose name and memory will be ever dear to our hearts, and long be bedewed by the tears of the widow and the orphan, of whom he was ever the kind and the feeling friend.

To the other endowments of nature, the munificent Author of Good, added the gift and taste of Music, which from his earliest youth, began to make their appearance ; and his succeeding life has shown that his whole mind and soul was attuned to harmony ; every chord of which, vibrated at the slightest touch, and gave the softest tones of music's power. To vocal and instrumental music both inclined ; the fife and the flute were among the choicest companions of his child-hood ; they cheered his evening walks, and supplied the place of a friend in retirement. To sing, ever gave him the sweetest delight. (Alluding to an anecdote of his youth) I saw him on a summer's evening, when the

zephyrs gently fanned him, with a few of his select companions, repair to yonder reputable mansion, where his melodious voice attracted the attention of its inhabitants, who being charmed, invited his acceptance of their kind attention. Then said I, this is surely ominous. Those who inhabit the temple of worship will hear that voice and invite him to head their praise, and when it is mature, angels from heaven will listen to it, and call him to their blessed abodes.

His first guide to the rudiments of music, was the late WILLIAM BILLINGS. Being instructed from his infancy, in the principles of religion, and taught to remember the Sabbath, the hours thereof not occupied in the public services of the sanctuary, were devoted to sacred harmony.

His valuable services are inscribed on the records of the Singing Society in Federal Street, Boston; and on those of the Presbyterian Church in Providence, and will long be proclaimed by the solemn organ in that place, which he was instrumental in procuring.—Soon after his return from Providence to this place, he joined the valuable Musical Society, called the Philharmonic Society, and designed to cultivate and improve the style and performance of instrumental music, which is so essential to the perfection of vocal; especially, on all great and public occasions, for whose services and improvements the religious public, are under obligations of gratitude to God. To establish and perpetuate the fame of this association he consecrated his successful efforts, and was rewarded by being appointed their Vice President.

In the year 1815, with a number of amateurs and professors of the Sacred Science, he actively engaged

in devising the plan, and establishing the respectable society, since designated by the appellation of "The Handel and Haydn Society," instituted to cultivate and improve the taste and science of sacred music; and at once, to gratify and correct the public taste, by performing on a more extensive scale, those sublime and difficult pieces, which had not heretofore been performed in our country. Having happily succeeded in its establishment, he was selected as its first President, the duties of which, he ably discharged to entire satisfaction for two successive years. It was here that he found a theatre suited to the full display of his vast fund of science, taste, and judgment; and here that he shone in a light allied to the splendor of heaven. Able in theory, skilled in practice, and favoured with the nicest discriminating power; his capacious and discerning mind enabled him, even in the most complicated and extensive performance, to discern the smallest defect, and dictated to him the instrument, or voice, which would best supply its place, and parfect the harmony of the whole.

With what admiring satisfaction have we seen him lead in singing the infinitely sublime Glories of Creation—Redemption—and the Mesiah of God; and almost forgotten that the lays were mortal, and the place was not heaven.—But hark! a plaintive voice from the west, proclaims "thy WEBB is no more!" "the lay has faultered and expired upon his mortal tongue!" sudden indeed, and dishartening is the shock it gives to our feelings, and sorely painful are the emotions, which it excites in our palpitating bosoms.

In the meridian of his life, in perfect health, and with unabated strength, he has but just taken his leave of us

for his seat in Worthington, Ohio.—To return after a few months, and rejoin us in the pleasant scenes of life. Behold him arrive at Cleveland, near the place of his destination, where an affectionate Daughter's* arms were already spread to receive a father's embrace;—here the inexorable messenger of death meets him—sternly denies him that privilege—and only a few hours elapse, when he makes his exit from the shores of life.†

Oh! my Brother! The keenest grief wounds my spirit, and I mourn for thee. Not that thou art released from this world of sorrow and grief; but because in thy dreadful conflict with death, the soothing voice of thy dearer self was not there to console thee; no female relative was there to hold in her's thy feverish hand, to gently press thy throbbing temples, and wipe away the dew of death from thy fallen brow.‡—But hush! an angel from heaven speaks, and kindly says, "Weep not ye companions and friends."—his work on earth was done, and he is summoned to sweep in heaven the golden lyre of immortal praise.

Let us, my friends, wipe away our tears, and for one moment contemplate him, not as he was on earth,

* This Daughter of Col. Webb's, had been at the Westward for nearly a year, and was anxiously waiting his arrival, having been apprised of his being at Cleveland previous to his death, by a passenger who came in the stage with him. She was expecting to return with him to her friends in Boston.

† He was in the forty-eighth year of his age.

‡ Though the bereaved widow, and afflicted relations of Brother Webb, were deprived of the privilege of being present, and performing for him, the offices of kindness in his last moments, yet they are greatly comforted from the assurance, that though far from them, and among strangers, he had able physicians, and kind friends, who left nothing undone for his relief, which could be effected by skill, or kin ness; that speedy intelligence of his death was sent to his Daughter, and his friends at Worthington; and his funeral attended by a large concourse of friendly strangers, when a Sermon was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Hanford, and his dear remains interred in Masonic order.

but as the christian hope presents him now in heaven. Free from the cares, solicitudes, and disappointments of this life, separated from the weakness and imperfections of humanity, by the grace of a Saviour; forever secured from the approach of suffering and death, by immortality. There his mind, affections, passions, feelings, yea all of him, that was social and lovely, live sanctified, purified, exalted and perfected in glory. Associated with the blessed inhabitants of heaven; he will forever admire with them the unfolding mysteries of eternity. O, if persuasion hung upon my lips, how earnestly would I entreat you, my friends, to imitate the purity of their celestial minds, and emulate the virtues of their ransomed lives; and thus qualified to be engaged with them, in surveying the perfections of Deity, and forever offering before Him, on deathless harps, the hallowed ascriptions of adoration and praise.

## HYMN.

*Written by the Rev. Dr.* HARRIS.

We mourn a leader of our train,
And now the Funeral Dirge begin,
And seek in music's soothing strain,
A respite from our grief to win.

Soft be the notes from friendship due,
To one whose voice, attuned with ours ;
Once would the theme of praise pursue,
With harmony's delightful powers.

But solemn be the strain and slow,
When of that friend's decease we tell ;
For ah ! it breathes the tones of woe,
So soon to part—to say "farewell!"

Farewell !—but we shall meet again,
In choirs above, and anthems raise,
In symphonies of heavenly strain,
And chorus of unending praise.

## HYMN.

*Written by* CHARLES P. SUMNER, *Esq.*

Music her sweetest notes should raise,
To pour to him deserved praise,
Who led with dignity and grace,
Her foremost vot'ries in this place.

A mason he of brilliant name,
Each brother knew and loved his fame,
With ease be filled his peerless part,
'Mongst those who most adorned the art.

A man of placid open mind,
Intent to benefit mankind,
In every sphere in which he moved,
Faithful, reproachless and beloved.

As a discreet and generous friend,
The memory of his worth shall end
Only, when time shall level low,
The hearts he oft has made to glow.

*New-England's* sons while journeying west,
Shall on *Ohio's* margin rest;
And ask with softened heart and eye,
Where WEBB's respected ashes lie.

And those who know his worth shall tell,
With looks of sorrow where he fell,
And near the bank of *Erie's* wave,
Is found his much frequented grave.

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